

Dollars worth more inside the plastic

By Roger Boye

This column answers more questions about coins and currency.

Q—We'd like to sell 10 Carson City silver dollars we bought from the government several years ago. Would we get a better price if we take the coins out of the plastic holders?

T.R., Winnetka

A—No. Old "CC" dollars encased in plastic are fetching special premiums on the hobby market. Also, you could damage the coins if you remove them.

Q—I'm considering the purchase of several U.S. gold coins made in the 1800s. What's the best way to be certain the items are not counterfeit?

R.D., Chicago

A—First, do business with well-established dealers who guarantee in writing to give refunds if the coins are found to be fakes. Next, send your gold to the American Numismatic Association Certification Service, which will use sophisticated equipment to authenticate and grade each coin.

The ANA service costs approximately \$25 per item for non-ANA members, and if your coins are genuine, you'll get certificates so stating. Write to the ANA at 818 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, Colo. 80903.

Q—We've got a few \$5 bills from the 1920s that say "Redeemable in gold at the United States Treasury" and several \$1 silver certificates that promise "One dollar in silver payable to the bearer on demand." Where can we go to get our gold and silver?

W.E., Hickory Hills

A—Old U.S. paper money can no longer be redeemed in gold or silver, regardless of what is printed on the bills. Uncle Sam voided the exchange statements years ago.

Q—I found some Lincoln cents with mint marks looking more like blobs. Are my coins unusual?

P.S., Northbrook

A—No. Filled mint marks are a common production mistake, caused when metal filings or other foreign matter covers a portion of the dies used to make coins. Your cents have little value to a collector.